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SUICIDE SQUAD
5
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MISSION TO MOSCOW
WHO watches the WATCHMEN?

THE FLIGHT OF THE FIREBIRD

A JOHN OSTRANDER · LUKE McDONNELL · BOB LEWIS PRODUCTION

ROBERT GREENBERGER DIRECTOR

TITLES BY TODD KLEIN, INC.

COLOR BY CARL GAFFORD STUDIOS

THE PENGUIN

NIGHTSHADE

DEADSHOT

THE ENCHANTRESS

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MOSCOW.
I WANT ZOYA TRIGORIN SET FREE.
COMRADE CHAIRMAN, I MUST PROTEST! THE WOMAN IS AN ENEMY OF THE STATE AND THE DAUGHTER OF AN ENEMY TO THE STATE.
HER BOOK, THE FIREBIRD, ATTACKS OUR NUCLEAR DEFENSE SYSTEM IN THE CLEAREST ALLEGORICAL TERMS!
IT IS A CLUMSY BOOK, COMRADE URT, GIVEN ATTENTION ONLY BECAUSE OF WHO TRIGORIN'S FATHER AND GRANDFATHER WERE.
WE HAVE MADE IT NOTORIOUS BY CONFINING THE AUTHOR TO A GULAG AS WE DID HER FATHER WHERE, I MIGHT REMIND YOU, HE DIED IGNOMINIOUSLY.

HE DIED AS HE DESERVED. ANATOLI TRIGORIN WAS A BOURGEOIS REACTIONARY AND A TRAITOR TO THE SOVIET PEOPLE!

THIS IS TOO MUCH TALK. WHY DON'T WE JUST *SHOOT* HIM?

DOING SO SOLVES NOTHING, GENERAL.

IF IT IS ONLY THE *CRUDENESS* OF A BULLET THAT BOTHERS YOU, COMRADE GORBACHEV, I WOULD *REMIND* YOU THE KGB HAS *MANY* WAYS OF INDUCING DEATH. AND IT CAN BE MADE TO LOOK *MOST* NATURAL.

IF ZOYA TRIGORIN *DIES* WHILE IN NOVOGORDD PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, IN THE GULAG, LIKE HER FATHER, SHE WILL HAVE *ACHIEVED* THE MARTYRDOM SHE SO FERVENTLY SEEKS.

THAT IS WHAT WE SEEK TO *PREVENT*, COMRADE ZASTROW.

IF YOU WANT TO *DISCREDIT* HER, LET HER WRITE MORE BOOKS. AFTER ALL, SHE IS NO *BULGAKOV*.

NO! SUCH WRITING *POISONS* THE MIND. ABOVE ALL, WE MUST PROTECT OUR *CHILDREN* WHO ARE YOUNG AND IMPRESSIONABLE!

WHAT OF A *TRADE?*

WE OFFER TRIGORIN TO THE *WEST* IN EXCHANGE FOR SOME PRESTIGIOUS POLITICAL PRISONER THE WEST HAS ROTTING IN *ITS* CELLS.

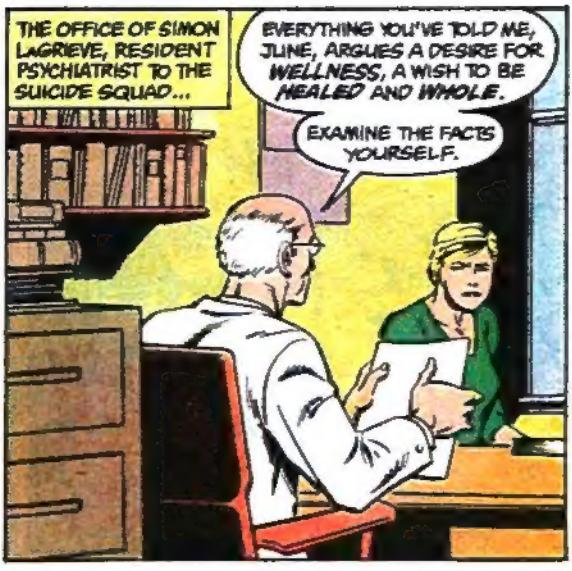
THE ONUS OF WORLD OPINION THEN FALLS ON *THEM* AND AWAY FROM *US*.

HMMM. THERE MAY BE SOMETHING *TO* THAT, COMRADE ZASTROW.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

THERE'S NO ROOM FOR EXCESS BAGGAGE ON THIS TRIP SO WHY MUST I GO ON IT?
I'D HAVE MORE FAITH IN THE PLAN IF THE PLANNER HAD A STAKE IN IT.
EGAD! YOU INSULT ME, SIR!
TOUGH.
...I'LL LOOK OVER THESE MAPS AGAIN...
FINE.
TELL ME STRAIGHT, FLAG: YOU THINK THIS CAN WORK?
A FAIR CHANCE. IT'S INGENIOUS ENOUGH.
MY REAL OBJECTION IS THAT IT'S NOT REALLY NECESSARY. LIKE THE PENGUIN SAID, IT'S FOR PROPAGANDA. AND IT'S REAL HIGH RISK.
WORRIES ME, TOO. FOUGHT LIKE THE DEVIL WHEN IT WAS PROPOSED. TOLD THEM I DIDN'T WANT ANY PURELY POLITICAL MISSIONS.
BUT IT WAS THIS OR NICARAGUA.
SOMETHING ELSE BITING YOUR BUTT, ISN'T THERE, COLONEL?
IT'S THE ENCHANTRESS.
PLAN DEPENDS A LOT ON HER BUT SHE'S GETTING DARKER, LESS CONTROLLABLE, ALL THE TIME.
WHAT HAPPENS IF SHE GOES BERSERK WHILE WE'RE IN RUSSIA?

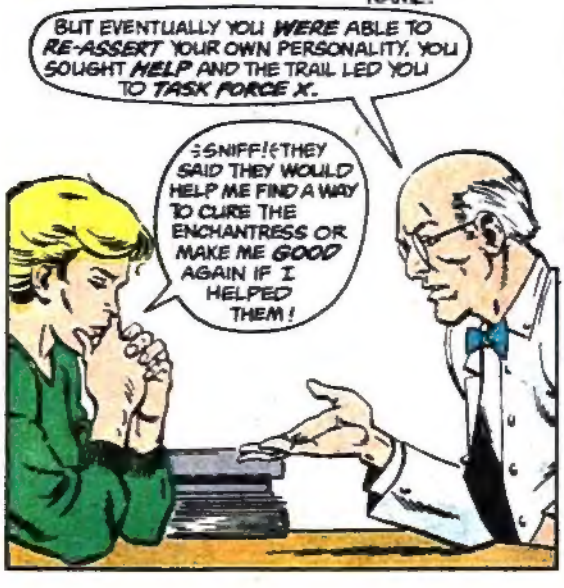
:WAUUUUG: IT'S THE BEST I CAN DO. IT HAS TO WORK! AND IF... WHEN IT DOES, I GO FREE, RIGHT? SENTENCE COMMUTED TO TIME SERVED? NO CATCH? NO TRICK?
ONLY TRICK IS SURVIVING, COBBLEPOT. THAT'S THE ONLY TRICK THERE EVER IS.

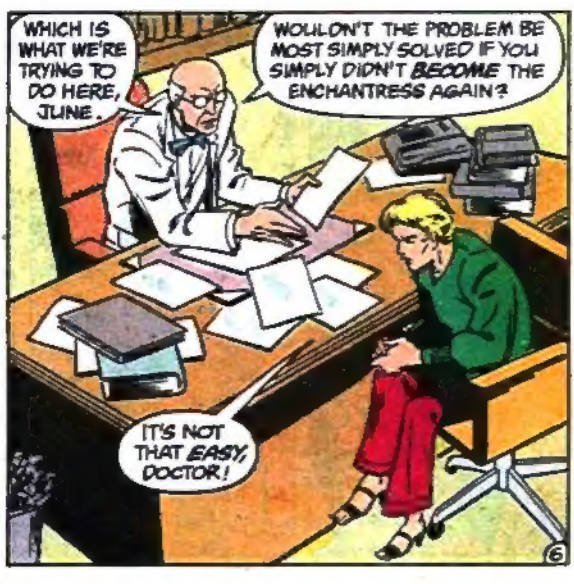

THE OFFICE OF SIMON LAGRIEVE, RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST TO THE SUICIDE SQUAD...
EVERYTHING YOU'VE TOLD ME, JUNE, ARGUES A DESIRE FOR WELLNESS, A WISH TO BE HEALED AND WHOLE.
EXAMINE THE FACTS YOURSELF.

YOU SAY IT WAS AN ENCOUNTER WITH THIS CREATURE CALLED OZAMOR THAT GAVE YOU YOUR POWERS.
"THEY WERE MANIFESTED BY YOUR ENCHANTRESS PERSONA, WHO EMERGED WHENEVER YOU SAID HER NAME.

"WHILE ORIGINALLY A FORCE FOR GOOD, THE ENCHANTRESS PERSONA BECAME EVIL, ULTIMATELY JOINING A GROUP CALLED THE FORGOTTEN VILLAINS."

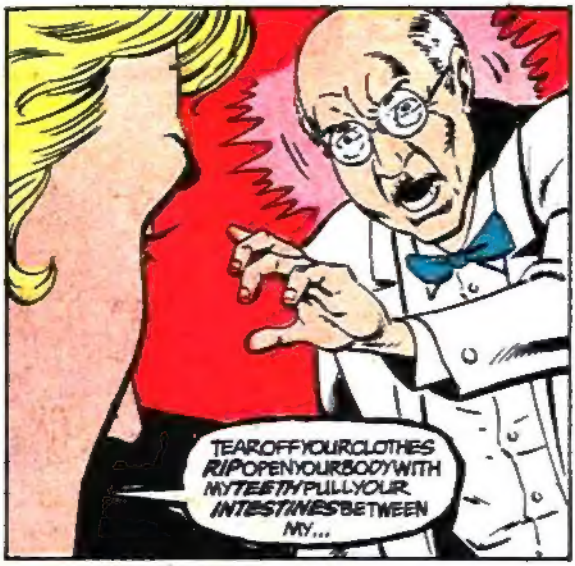
YES... YES! SHE JUST TOOK OVER AND WOULDN'T CHANGE BACK! I FELT TRAPPED!


BUT EVENTUALLY YOU WERE ABLE TO RE-ASSERT YOUR OWN PERSONALITY. YOU SOUGHT HELP AND THE TRAIL LED YOU TO TASK FORCE X.
:SNIFF!: THEY SAID THEY WOULD HELP ME FIND A WAY TO CURE THE ENCHANTRESS OR MAKE ME GOOD AGAIN IF I HELPED THEM!

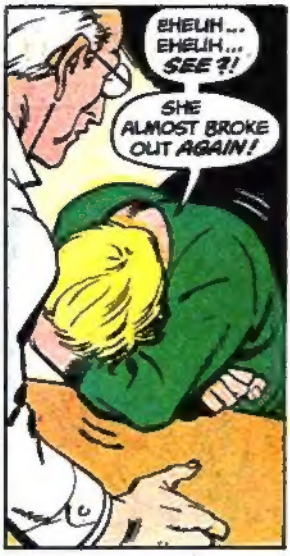

WHICH IS WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO DO HERE, JUNE.
WOULDN'T THE PROBLEM BE MOST SIMPLY SOLVED IF YOU SIMPLY DIDN'T BECOME THE ENCHANTRESS AGAIN?
IT'S NOT THAT EASY, DOCTOR!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO KEEP HER IN!

SHALL I TELL YOU WHAT SHE'D LIKE TO DO WITH YOU, DOCTOR?


TEAR OFF YOUR CLOTHES RIP OPEN YOUR BODY WITH MY TEETH PULL YOUR INTESTINES BETWEEN MY...

STOP IT, DO YOU HEAR ME?!
STOP IT AT ONCE.


EHELIH... EHELIH... SEE?!
SHE ALMOST BROKE OUT AGAIN!

I'M EVIL.
I'D BE BETTER OFF DEAD!

YOU'RE NOT EVIL, JUNE MOONE. YOU'RE ACTUALLY A VERY BRAVE YOUNG WOMAN WHO WANTS TO BE WELL.

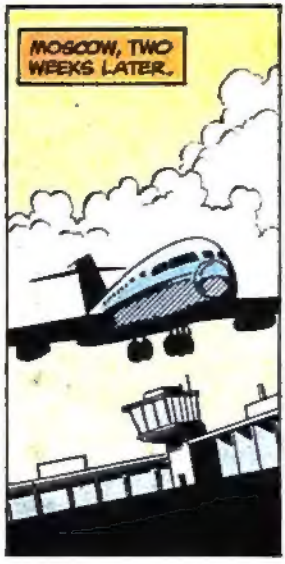
I SWEAR TO YOU WE WILL DO ANYTHING, EXPLORE EVERY AVENUE, TO HELP YOU.

SNIFF. OH, THANK YOU, DOCTOR.
THANK YOU!

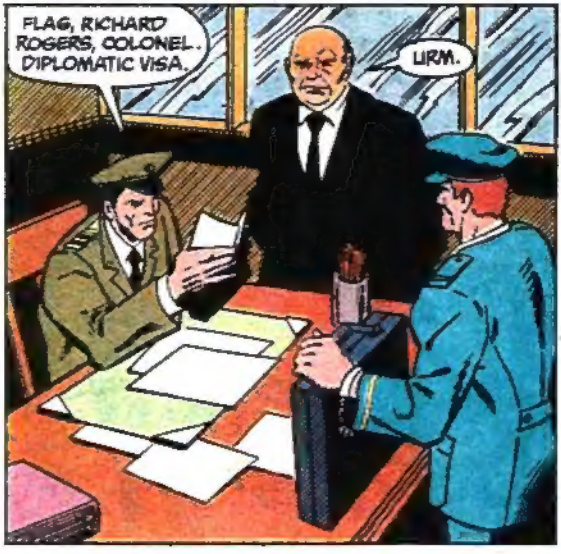
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

LAWTON'S RIGHT ON ONE SCORE; I TRY ANYTHING CREATIVE AND I'LL GET BLINGED GOOD.
AND HERE I WAS JUST GETTIN' ITCHY.

STILL, NO ONE SAID CAPTAIN BOOMERANG HAS TO BE THE ARTIST, NOW DID THEY?


MOSCOW, TWO WEEKS LATER.

SPACIPO.
URM.


FLAG, RICHARD ROGERS, COLONEL. DIPLOMATIC VISA.
URM.

COLONEL FLAG? EMBASSY SENT ME TO PICK YOU UP... SIR.
URM.

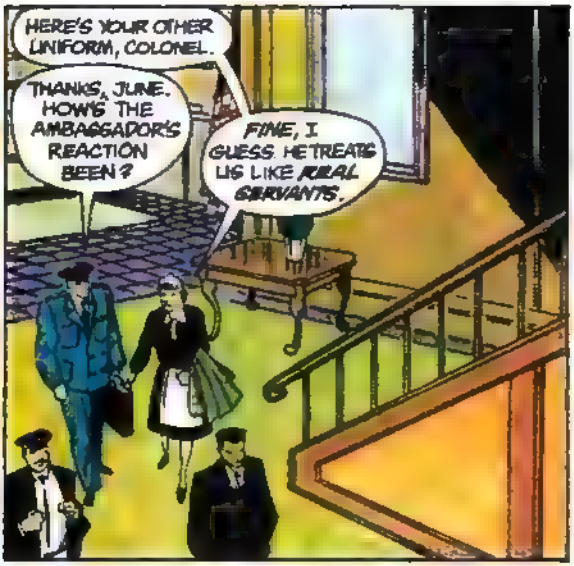
EVERYBODY ELSE CYCLED IN, LAWTON?
YEAH. SUPPOSEDLY EMBASSY STAFF TO REPLACE THOSE THE RUSSIANS TOOK AWAY.

WAS SURPRISED WHEN THE PENGUIN TOLD US YOU KNOW RUSSIAN.
PICKED IT UP AS A KID. THAT AND A PARTY CARD. MADE THE OLD MAN NUTS.

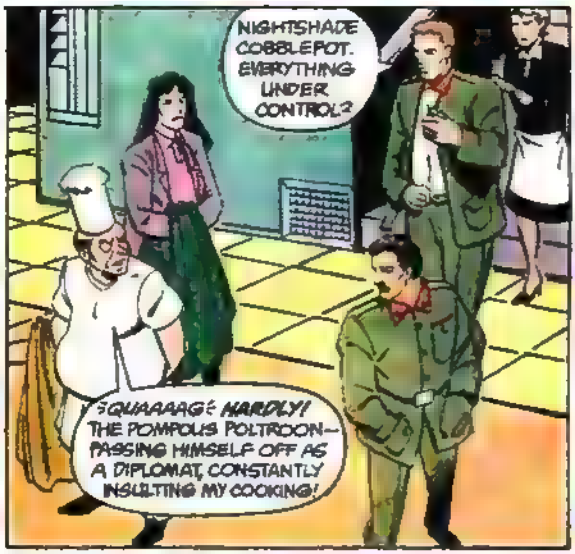
DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THAT CARD, EITHER, UNTIL JUST NOW.
EVERYBODY SHOULD HAVE THEIR LI'L SECRETS, COLONEL.

YEAH.
LET'S GET INSIDE.

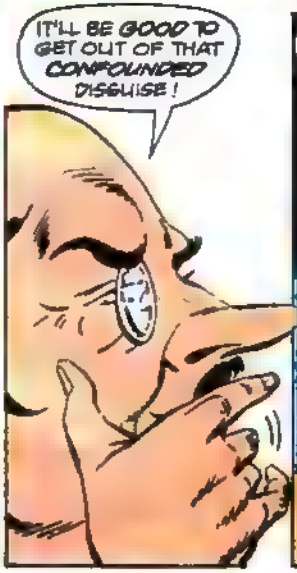
COLONEL.
BEN. HOW'S THE BUTTLING BUSINESS?
GETS OLD REAL FAST. OTHERS ARE DOWN IN THE BASEMENT, WAITING FOR YOU, AS PER INSTRUCTIONS


HERE'S YOUR OTHER UNIFORM, COLONEL.
THANKS, JUNE. HOW'S THE AMBASSADOR'S REACTION BEEN?
FINE, I GUESS. HE TREATS US LIKE REAL SERVANTS.

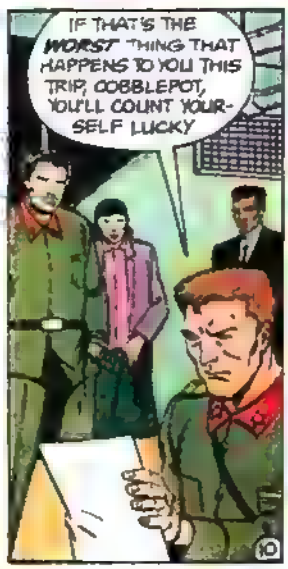
HM. I WONDER IF STATE HAS TOLD HIM WHAT WE'RE REALLY ABOUT?
RELAX, COLONEL. HE'S PROBABLY JUST HAPPY TO HAVE SOME LACKEYS AGAIN.


NIGHTSHADE COBBLEPOT. EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL?
SQUAAAAG! HARDLY! THE POMPOUS POLTROON—PASSING HIMSELF OFF AS A DIPLOMAT, CONSTANTLY INSULTING MY COOKING!

BUT I FIXED HIM.
I SCORCHED HIS KIPPERS! WAUG! WAUG! WAUG!

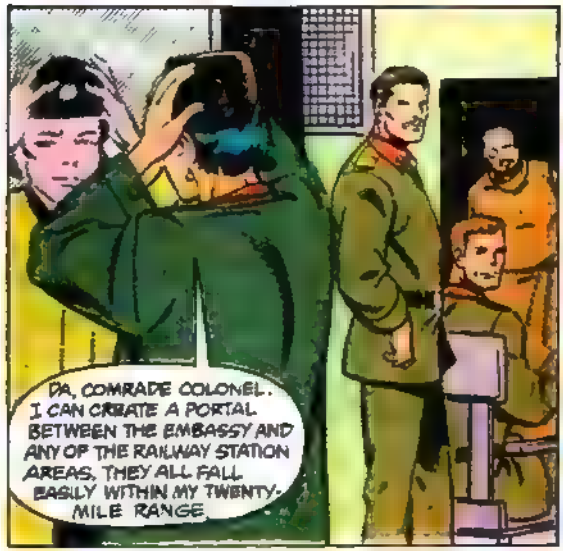

IT'LL BE GOOD TO GET OUT OF THAT CONFOUNDED DISGUISE!

DRAT! THIS ONE IS WORSE! IT BITES!


IF THAT'S THE WORST THING THAT HAPPENS TO YOU THIS TRIP, COBBLEPOT, YOU'LL COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY

I'M KEEPING THE DETAILS OF THE ESCAPE CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL WE REACH OUR DESTINATION. JUST IN CASE ANYONE GETS CAUGHT ALONG THE WAY. CAN'T SPILL WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW.
I'M A RUSSIAN COLONEL AND DEADSHOT IS MY AIDE-DE-CAMP. HE KNOWS THE LANGUAGE AND WILL HANDLE ANY INQUIRIES FOR OUR TEAM.

NIGHTSHADE, YOU'LL BE A COMMISSAR TRAVELLING WITH US. HAVE YOU HAD ANY CHANCE TO LOOK AROUND THE CITY?


DA, COMRADE COLONEL. I CAN CREATE A PORTAL BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND ANY OF THE RAILWAY STATION AREAS. THEY ALL FALL EASILY WITHIN MY TWENTY-MILE RANGE.

BRONZE TIGER WILL STAY HERE AS LIAISON AND BACK-UP.
TOO BAD. I WOULDN'T HAVE MINDED A BLACK RUSSIAN OR TWO ON THIS TRIP! WAUG! WAUG! WAUG!

JUNE IS A PEASANT GIRL. DEAF-MUTE TRAVELLING WITH HER TOWN PRIEST WHO IS HARD OF HEARING

EH?
DON'T GET CUTE, PENNY. THEY TAKE THEIR PRISONS SERIOUSLY HERE.

QUESTIONS?

LET'S ROLL.

FIZZLEE

GO!

EGAD! THROUGH THAT? I'LL BE... I WON'T...

OHHHH... DRAT!

STATION'S AROUND THE CURVE.
KEEP IN MIND THAT IF ANYTHING'S GOING TO GO WRONG, IT'LL PROBABLY BE ON THE TRAIN.

SCATTER. WE STAND A BETTER CHANCE IF WE DON'T ALL APPROACH THE TRAIN TOGETHER.
LET'S FORGET THIS. I'D RATHER SERVE OUT MY SENTENCE!

КРАПНА

DIDN'T SOMEBODY TELL THAT MOOK TO DITCH THE MONOCLE?

COVER HIM. HE'S GOING TO CRACK.

‹EXCUSE ME, LITTLE FATHER, BUT YOU LOOK LOST. MAY I BE OF HELP?›

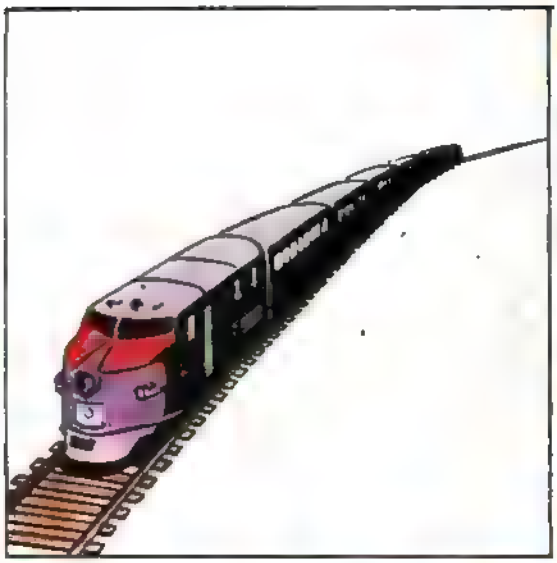
‹YOUR HEARING IS GONE? LET ME LOOK AT YOUR TICKET. MY, WHAT A COINCIDENCE. WE'RE TRAVELLING TOGETHER. COME.›

GO WITH HIM. AND, NEXT TIME, WATCH WHICH FINGER YOU USE.

ARE WE SAFE NOW?

FOR THE MOMENT, BUT KEEP IN MIND WE'RE HEADED FOR GORKI, ONE OF THE CENTERS FOR THEIR DEFENSE INDUSTRY AND ONE OF THE MOST SECURITY-SENSITIVE AREAS IN ALL OF RUSSIA.

THE CLOSER WE GET, THE CLOSER THEY'LL LOOK.



GORKI.

КОММУНИЗМ—
СВЕТЛОЕ БУДУЩЕЕ
ВСЕГО ЧЕЛОВЕЧЕСТВА

EVE, HAVE YOU FIXED THIS PLACE IN YOUR HEAD? CAN YOU GET US BACK HERE WHEN WE NEED TO?

NO PROBLEM, RICK

SPLIT UP. HEAD FOR THE RENDEZVOUS POINT. WITH LUCK, BY THIS TIME TOMORROW, WE'LL BE BACK AT THE EMBASSY

NOVOGOROD PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, JUST OUTSIDE GORKI

THERE'S THE TARGET. GLAD YOU ALL MADE IT.
IT'S YOUR PLAN, PENGUIN, SO WHY DON'T YOU BRIEF THE OTHERS

QUAAAG! PLEASE HOLD YOUR APPLAUSE UNTIL I'M FINISHED. GETTING THE FIREBIRD OUT OF HER CAGE WAS NEVER THE PROBLEM!
SECURITY IS NOTHING IN THAT TINDERBOX! THE PROBLEM HAS ALWAYS BEEN GETTING TRIGORIN OUT OF RUSSIA ONCE WE HAD HER!

IT'S AT LEAST A THOUSAND MILES TO THE NEAREST BORDER AND ALL OF IT THROUGH HOSTILE TERRITORY! QUAAAGH! THE TRICK IS TO BE GONE BEFORE THEY DISCOVER THE FIREBIRD IS MISSING.
SO WE MAKE USE OF THE ENCHANTRESS' ABILITY TO ALTER HER OWN APPEARANCE AND SHE BECOMES ZOYA TRIGORIN WHILE WE STEAL OUT OF RUSSIA WITH THE ORIGINAL.
WHEN WE'RE CLEAR, ENCHANTRESS CHANGES BACK, PASSES THROUGH THE WALL AND FLIES TO FREEDOM, WHILE THE COMMIES STAND AROUND WITH RED FACES! WAUG! WAUG! WAUG!

THERE'S THE SIGNAL. LET'S GO, JUNE.

COLONEL, I ..
LET'S GO, JUNE!

ENCHANTRESS!

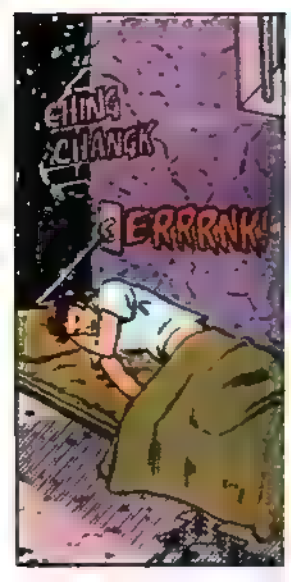
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

INSIDE THE HOSPITAL ..
BRRRT
<SPASSKY. COME.>

<YES, COMRADE DOCTOR?>
<I HAVE BEEN EXAMINING THE FILE OF THE PATIENT ZOYA TRIGORIN.>

<BRING HER TO THIS OFFICE.>
<NOW? BUT, COMRADE DOCTOR, IT IS AFTER MIDNIGHT! SURELY THIS CAN WAIT UNTIL MORNING...!>

<I WAS SENT BY MOSCOW TO GET RESULTS! NOT TO HAVE MY ORDERS QUESTIONED BY AN ORDERLY WHO IS ABOUT TO BE REASSIGNED TO A POST IN SIBERIA!>
<ALL RIGHT! I'M GOING...!>


CHING
CHANGK
ERRRNK

<ZOYA TRIGORIN!>

<HMMMF? WHA...?>

<ON YOUR FEET QUICKLY!>

TELL ME, DARLING. DOES BEING WITH ME LIKE THIS FRIGHTEN YOU?
HARDLY. I'VE SEEN PLACES AND BEINGS THAT WOULD MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE A GIRL SCOUT.
HMMM. YOU MUST TAKE ME THERE SOMEDAY
OH, I INTEND TO.
<WHA...WHAT TIME IS IT? WHAT DO YOU—?>
<DO AS YOU'RE TOLD! COME!>
<I HAVE BROUGHT THE TRAITOR TRIGORIN AS ORDERED, COMRADE DOCTOR!>
<I AM NO TRAITOR, COMRADES. I AM A DAUGHTER OF MOTHER RUSSIA WHO FEARS FOR THE SOUL OF HER COUNTRY>
<SILENCE!>
<YOU MAY GO, SPASSKY>
<THE REGULATIONS CLEARLY STATE THAT AN ORDERLY SHOULD BE WITH THE PATIENT AT ALL STAGES OF THE INTERVIEW...>
18

<I KNOW THE REGULATION. I WROTE IT.>
<I WROTE IT TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM INCOMPETENTS SUCH AS YOURSELF; NOT TO BE SADDLED WITH THEM.>
<OUT!>
<VERY WELL, COMRADE DOCTOR; I GO.>
BUT I WILL NOT GO FAR!
<WHY DO YOU BOTHER WITH ALL THIS? I HAVE NOT DISOWNED MY BOOK. I WILL NOT DISOWN IT. IT IS AS MY CHILD TO ME.>
<YOU KILLED MY FATHER BECAUSE HE TOLD THE TRUTH. YOU WILL ALSO KILL ME. WHY DO YOU DELAY?>
<AND IF THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY OUT, ZOYA TRIGORIN? A WAY WITH HONOR? WOULD YOU TAKE IT?>
<WHAT WAY? YOU SPEAK IN RIDDLES...!>
<WHAT IS--?>
<MOTHER IN HEAVEN!>
FASHHH

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

JUST MANIPULATING A LITTLE ENERGY, MY DEAR. WATCH.

SEE?
<BY ALL THE SAINTS!>

WHY? WHY DOES THIS WOMAN DO THIS? WHY SHE STEALS MY FACE?

EASY, ZOYA! SHE'S GOING TO TAKE YOUR PLACE!
WE'VE COME TO TAKE YOU TO FREEDOM!

NO!!!

NEXT: IT ALL GETS MESSY WHEN EVERYTHING *HITS THE FAN!*

SUICIDE NOTES

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I can't recall any title getting as much mail as SUICIDE SQUAD has received over the last few months. Thank you all. Obviously, with that much mail, we can't run all your letters so we're going with the choicest comments on our first issue.

Our letter column contest had hundreds of suggestions but the clear runaway winner, by acclamation practically, was Suicide Notes. First suggested by Janette R. Gerdes of Collinsville, IL, who gets the year's subscription starting with this very issue.

And now...

Dear Bob and John,

So far, so good. As a 20 year DC reader who wasn't quite impressed with the "free the bad guys as fast as the heroes catch 'em" aspect of this book, I can say that I was impressed with the premiere issue. You ducked the issue that left me wary and discussed others that put the Squad in a somewhat better light: as something that's needed, like Castor Oil.

I don't know if a book with a constantly rotating cast can catch on with the readers. There have to be some interesting *permanent* members of the team that readers can get to know on a six months-to-a-year basis.

Captain Boomerang may be a big mouth, but on page 21 he did raise an interesting point. How do you take a bunch of losers (against every hero in the book) and make them into winners? And believable winners at that. Doctor Light isn't the only crook with a screw-up syndrome.

Charles D. Brown
Brentwood, NY

*****

...I picked up SQUAD #1 purely out of curiosity, on a lark. The beautiful Chaykin cover certainly helped to sway me, proving once again the power of fine cover art. When I sat down with the book, and started pouring through it, I was literally shocked. The doggone thing was *good!* It didn't look at all like the piece in SECRET ORIGINS. If I didn't know better, I would have thought the two books had been drawn by entirely different artists. Karl Kesel truly makes a difference in bringing out the strengths in Luke's pencils.

And the scripting was very strong and well-structured, much better than that in SO. John started the story with an apparent terrorist attack on an American airport which results in the murder of the President. Then, he revealed the attack was a sham, a "demo reel" for the Jihad, a group of super-terrorists. The people who were killed were real ... a truly ruthless twist. Then, John took us to the prison where the Squad does its recruiting, and showed that they would go after the Jihad. At the end, the SS debarks on their first new mission, a job which will be more than a little difficult, judging from what we've seen of the Jihad and their HQ. It all moved along smoothly, presenting unusual points of view and details to pull the reader further into the story. Mainly, it was all a set-up for the mission to come, but it held my interest the whole way through.

Robert T. Jeschonek
Johnstown, PA

*****

...To paraphrase Captain Boomerang, "It impressed." It impressed me very much. At last, we have an original concept, not just another super-hero or team. This is the only mainline comic book I know that was released since CRISIS that has had anything like a new idea. The Squad was the only bright spot in LEGENDS. I think and hope you have a big hit on your hands.

One good point is that the concept looks like most stories will be multi-part episodes. I think three or four part storylines will work great, especially since there will be a relatively high character turnover. You can develop characters quickly in this format. I can't wait to see what comes after the Jihad. Kobra is still out there, you know.

Sal Portaro
Charleston, SC

*****

...I know you editorial types like constructive criticism, carefully articulated letters with reasoned arguments for or against certain aspects of particular stories, but me, I'm a gut-level person. I prefer to offer spontaneous responses, more heartfelt than deliberated. Thus I am writing to give you my verdict on SUICIDE SQUAD #1 FAAAANTASTIC!

Seriously, I was well pleased with "Trial by Blood." After a rather tedious SECRET ORIGINS story, I was wondering how the first issue would be. It was better than I could ever have imagined. John Ostrander paced the story wonderfully. Each character in the Squad was handled extremely well, allowing for space limitations. John avoided rushing things but also kept the pace hot, adding a few degrees with the reuniting of Rick Flag and Karin on page 20. I can well believe that SUICIDE SQUAD is a labor of love, judging by John's work. Even the inevitable rivalries between the villains who make up the team were done convincingly and defied cliche.

Dale Coe
Warrington, Cheshire, England

*****

Dear Suiciders,

I'm just dropping you a line from "down under" to tell you how much I'm enjoying LEGENDS and all its spin-offs. Right from issue #3 of LEGENDS I fell in love with the SUICIDE SQUAD and eagerly awaited #1 which I recently snapped up. I enjoyed Luke McDonnell's work in JLA and also think the rest of the Suicide Crew are terrific, just right for the SUICIDE SQUAD.

I really enjoy the Australian super-villain, Captain Boomerang.

Ashley Howarth
Wahroonga, Australia

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...I think that you and the creative staff on SUICIDE SQUAD are on the right track, Bob. Judging by the SECRET ORIGINS story and the Squad's first issue, this series could break some new and exciting ground in the coming months. Besides, you must be doing something right if in two stories I can go from absolutely loathing the Suicide Squad to getting a great deal of enjoyment out of them. If you find out what it is you're doing right, let me know and we'll bottle and sell it. Meanwhile, have fun with the SUICIDE SQUAD and congratulations on a superb first issue.

Jonathan Gilbert
London, Ontario, Canada

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...When I read LEGENDS, the Suicide Squad really got my attention. They're real. I mean, everyone else lives up to the high moralistic attitude they all portray. OK, fine. But not everyone can, or wants to, do that. And that's the Suicide Squad. They only want to help themselves. They may not even care why they're doing what they're doing. So long as they survive and get their sentences reduced. They don't have a lot of compassion for their adversaries.

which is why they can kill. You won't see Superman doing that.

I especially like Deadshot. He appeals to me, somehow. Maybe it's his self-destructive nature. Who knows. I'd like to see him develop into a strong, silent type. Like having a simplistic, straight-to-the-point attitude.

Mark R. Grooms
Canton, MI

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...Lately, DC has been putting out some real winners. Whether it's WONDER WOMAN, THE QUESTION, THE FLASH, CAPTAIN ATOM, SUPERMAN, the JUSTICE LEAGUE or the BATMAN, we're being bombarded by new creative teams, new directions and, in some cases, new first issues. And I'm happy to say that I'm having more fun reading comic books now than I *ever* have because of these changes. Thus, I was very pleased to hear that DC was introducing yet another title, namely SUICIDE SQUAD. I liked them in LEGENDS and I thought they had great potential starring in their own on-going series.

Well, SUICIDE SQUAD #1 is finally out. And, unfortunately, I don't think it's very good.

I found flat art and a predictable introduction story. Now, I may not be an artist, but I know what looks good. Throughout the entire issue, the artwork seemed rushed and very plain. It just lacked the style and panache that differentiates exciting art from so-so art. As for the story itself, I was hoping for something with a more original way of presenting the characters. Even disregarding this, the characterization was almost as stiff as the art.

Tony Becker
Oxford, OH

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...The Jihad appears to be a great enemy and counterpoint to the Suicide Squad. Mrs. Waller's briefing on the Jihad was well done. It was interesting, brief and informative. Also the art was well done, alternating Waller with the Jihad members was visually effective. The concept behind the Squad is interesting and provides many alternatives. Keep Captain Boomerang around, he's the best member. And I hope the Jihad sticks around, but not every issue.

Stephen Cade
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

*****

...SUICIDE SQUAD #1 was, for me, an enigma. I thumbed through the first issue with some reservations while trying to decide whether I should purchase the book or not. Granted, the artwork was good—very good in fact. Another plus was having Ostrander as the writer; past experience of his work has always been quite favorable. So why the hesitation?

The principal characters, I think. Not one of the characters truly excited me enough to warrant my taking the chance. To my way of thinking, each was nothing more than a mere second-stringer, none too noteworthy singularly and probably not too great as a team. However, in all fairness, I must now redefine my first impressions of the book.

It's quite obvious that egos are going to play an important part of every mission. Collectively, each character has an ego the size of which defies description and that, I feel, could prove the ultimate success overall of this title. Another asset is the unknown factor of trust. Do these characters individually trust one another enough to warrant them turning their backs to their teammates in the face of danger? This question alone holds much of the suspense and intrigue which this book promises.

R.J. Van Santen
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

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...First of all, the big four of the team appear to be the Bronze Tiger, Deadshot, the Enchantress and Captain Boomerang. The Tiger is an excellent choice for second-in-command and works well as Rick Flag's enforcer. He's skilled, sure of himself and his abilities, and looks to be a good team player. I also love his new costume but I miss the tiger helmet. Deadshot is absolutely *the* perfect character for this type of book. Correct mental attitude, excellent costume, everything about him is perfect. Don't change a thing. Although the Enchantress provides the team with "mystic muscle," I don't know enough about her to make a judgement as yet. As for Captain Boomerang, well it seems that as last year was the year of the homicidal maniac, this year is the year of the jerk. Every team has to have one. But don't fret. Digger is a great jerk.

Jody R. Martin
Greensboro, NC

*****

...John has done a great job with the characterizations. He's taken a loser, Captain Boomerang, and added a third dimension to this two dimensional character, rounding him out and giving the reader some idea of his motivation. The other character that John has done an exceptional job on is Amanda Waller. I look forward to seeing her put super-powered criminals in their place. They seem to be more afraid of her than they would be of the Spectre (insert plug here).

Bob Felker
Woonsocket, RI

Okay, you twisted my arm. Don't forget our New Format series, SPECTRE, by Doug Moench, Gene Colan and Steve Mitchell.

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NEXT ISSUE:

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Okay, so the team is in Russia and now they know their subject does not want to be rescued. What could possibly complicate things more? Well, for starters, how about Enchantress going bonkers or the entire Russian army being mobilized against them? It's a wild chase across the vastness of Russia as the team seeks asylum. Join John, Luke and Bob for part two of our little tale of intrigue.

Meantime, make sure you're buying WHO'S WHO UPDATE '87 considering we revealed the blueprints to Belle Reve in #1 last month and bring you the low-down on the Jihad next month. Also, you have been following John's revamping of FIRESTORM, right? Good, otherwise you'll miss a special selection of Suicide Squad members as the government sends them after the Nuclear Man. It begins in FIRESTORM #63 and concludes in the ANNUAL in a few more weeks.

We'll be here next month with more mail and fun. See you then and keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger

BEAST CHARMING
Perenially purveying a plenitude of purty, prettified pictures to my peerless pals!
HUMBLE CONTRIBUTOR TO #THECOMICRACK
Queries? Requests? Contact me at BeastCharming@yahoo.com
Pledged to scan all series great and small...